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Jenkins' Fort.

An historical address
by William A. Wilcox, Esq.
at West Pittston, Penna.
October 12, 1900.

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PRESENTED BY

JENKINS FORT.

An Historical Address by William A. Wilcox, Esq., at West Pittston, Pennsylvania, October 12, 1900, at the Dedication of a Monument Erected by Dial Rock Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution, Marking the Site of one of the Revolutionary Forts Built by the Connecticut Settlers in the Wyoming Valley.

[Reprinted from the PITTSTON GAZETTE of October 12, 1900.]

Members of Dial Rock Chapter, Ladies and Gentlemen:

The part assigned me in these exercises is the presenting of such account as is accessible of the fort your memorial stone commemorates.

It is part of a story which has been many times gone over by the historians of Wyoming and there seems to be little new to be added. I know personally somewhat of the anxiety to be thorough and of the care with which the late Shellen Reynolds, of grateful memory, examined the subject in preparing his report, which appears in the state publication, "Frontier Forts of Pennsylvania," and he was able to offer little as to Jenkins' Fort in addition to what was already in print. It was a matter of expressed regret with Mr. Reynolds that Mr. Steuben Jenkins had not lived to give to that commission the benefit of his years of study of local history and somewhat of the result of his many opportunities for gathering data regarding it. Mr. Jenkins took much pride in the prominent connection of his ancestors with the early history of our valley, and never overlooked anything relating to the name, so we may safely expect that there would be found among his papers specially full data regarding Jenkins' Fort. But all his papers Mrs. Jenkins regards as sacred, and her wishes are, of course, to be respected. I know no other so likely place to look for unpublished materials regarding Jenkins' Fort.

Under the circumstances, and inasmuch as I am to essay the part of an historian and not that of a novelist, I trust I shall not be criticised for quot-

ing very largely from those who have preserved to us part of this history.

The story of Jenkins' Fort can hardly be told without some brief reference to the Yankee-Pennamite controversy, and to the whole early history of the settlement.

From ignorance of the geography of the land, or from reckless indifference, or from both, Charles II made conflicting grants of the northern part of our Pennsylvania. The Connecticut royal grant was the earlier in date by at least eighteen years; the Connecticut people were the first to secure the Indian title; and the Connecticut settlers were the first on the ground, and there their descendants are today. The jurisdiction and right of soil were, however, given to Pennsylvania. The contest over the question whether this ground on which we stand should be Connecticut or Pennsylvania, or an independent state called perhaps Westmoreland or Wyoming, cost a considerable number of lives and great hardship and suffering.

The Connecticut people wanted this territory for actual settlement—wanted to make here homes for themselves and their children. In 1753 they organized the Connecticut Susquehanna Company and sent out explorers to examine and survey the land; they purchased the Indian title at the Albany Congress held in 1754, and in 1762 sent on settlers from among their own members. These men were here in person fighting their own battles when battles were to be fought, and when unmolested subduing the earth and making the fair valley what it speedily became—a veritable paradise.

Turn the pages of history as you will, you shall hardly find record of a more perfect life than that of the Connecticut settlers here, in that golden age of our local history. It is said that the first to visit the valley stood transfixed, as from the mountain's brow they looked down and traced the windings of the mighty river, marked the islands, the broad plains and rich natural meadows, the groves and foothills and the encircling mountain walls. Campbell sang of "Fair Wyoming—Sweet Wyoming" as the loveliest land of all this western world—a land of green declivities and sunny mountains, a land of romance and of innocence.

"So sweet a spot of earth you might
(I ween)

Have guessed some congregation of
the elves,

To sport by summer moons, had
shaped it for themselves."

Halleck, who had been here, as
Campbell had not, wrote,

"I've stood upon the wooded moun-
tain's brow,

That beetles high thy lovely valley o'er;
And now, where winds the river's
greenest shore,

Within a bower of sycamores am laid,
And winds, as soft and sweet as ever
fore

The fragrance of wild flowers through
sun and shade,

Are singing in the tree, whose low
boughs press my head.

Nature hath made thee lovelier than
the power

Even of Campbell's pen hath pic-
tured."

Nor was the charm confined to natural beauty. Fertility was here to which sun and soil contributed alike. A God-fearing, aggressive, self-reliant, industrious, law-abiding, intelligent, free people was here. Were they self-reliant, aggressive and energetic? They had come hither from the homes of their childhood, across rivers, through forests and over mountains, to renew a settlement which had been wiped out by the heartless Indian massacre of 1763. Were they God-fearing? Almost their first care was to provide for the preaching of the gospel. Were they virtuous? If you doubt it turn the pages of their records and see the trivial offences which alone occupied

their attention when they sat as a criminal court. Were they intelligent? They appropriated a certain definite portion of the land of each township for the support of schools, they established a fortnightly post to Hartford (Miner, 199), and, if this is not enough, you may read the evidences of their attainments in the acts and resolves of their local parliament. Were they law-abiding? Yes, for when Connecticut refused them the protection of her laws they enacted their own and provided for their enforcement. Were they independent? Think how near they came to establishing here a fourteenth original commonwealth. What element, indeed, of all that is implied in the noblest, truest manhood was wanting in these ancestors of yours? None.

"The testimonies of historians and travellers concur in describing the infant colony as one of the happiest spots of human existence, for the hospitable and innocent manners of the inhabitants, the beauty of the country, and the luxuriant fertility of the soil and climate."—Campbell.

Pennsylvania's hostility to this settlement was not that those most largely interested wanted to come here. Those who in the other century maintained here in the valley the Pennsylvania side of that controversy were for the most part civil officers from lower Pennsylvania, paid soldiers, and despised, traitorous, Tory spies. The Philadelphia land owners put forward these agencies to maintain a title which they doubtless deemed good, for what they expected to get out of it.

The New Englanders had succeeded in establishing themselves here and a few "years of tranquil enjoyment" (I quote from Miner, page 164,) "had increased the number of settlers at Wyoming, while unremitting industry upon a prolific soil, had diffused throughout the valley most of the necessities, many of the conveniences, and some of the luxuries of life. Abundant food and clothing were enjoyed in every cottage. Numerous herds of cattle grazed upon the mountains. Hill and meadow were spotted with flocks of sheep. The flats, nearly cleared, yielded thirty and forty fold the seed that was sown. Schoolhouses were erected

in every district. The Sabbath was kept with Puritan strictness. Congregated in convenient places the people listened to sermons from their gospel ministers. Prayer ascended to the Most High for grace in spiritual matters, and protection in their secular concerns; while

"They chant their artless notes in simple guise;

They tune their hearts, by far the noblest aim;

Perhaps Dundee's will warbling measures rise,

Or plaintive Martyrs, worthy of the name."

"Such was the picture presented by Wyoming at the commencement of 1775." (See also *Frontier Forts of Pennsylvania*, i; 431-2.) "At the spring election John Jenkins, Esq., the elder, was elected member of the general assembly to be holden at Hartford in May. The dispute between Great Britain and the colonies, now approaching to an open rupture, had already effected a sensible and, so far, not unfavorable influence on the settlement, as, by occupying the attention of the Proprietary government with more important affairs, the Connecticut people had been left undisturbed to extend and establish their possessions. The battle at Lexington had taken place April 19th. On the 17th of June the battle of Bunker's Hill was fought, so gloriously to the American arms. The effect produced at Wyoming by these soul-stirring events will be best expressed by the simple record of a town meeting legally warned."

"At a meeting of ye Proprietors and settlers of ye town of Westmoreland, legally warned and held in Westmoreland August 1st, 1775, Mr. John Jenkins was chosen Moderator for ye work of ye day.

"Voted that this town does now vote that they will strictly observe and follow ye rules and regulations of ye Honorable Continental Congress, now sitting at Philadelphia.

"Resolved by this town that they are willing to make any accommodations with ye Pennsylvania party that shall conduce to ye best good of ye whole, not infringing on the property of any person, and come in common cause of liberty and in ye defence of America,

and that we will amicably give them ye offer of joining in ye proposals as soon as may be.

"Voted this meeting is adjourned until Tuesday, ye 8th day of this instant, August, at one of the clock in ye afternoon at this place.

"This meeting is opened and held by an adjournment August the 8th, 1775.

"Voted—as this town has but of late been incorporated and invested with the privileges of the law, both civil and military, and now in a capacity of acting in conjunction with our neighboring towns within this and the other colonies, in opposing ye late measures adopted by Parliament to enslave America. Also this town having taken into consideration the late plan adopted by Parliament of enforcing their several oppressive and unconstitutional acts, of depriving us of our property, and of binding us in all cases without exception, whether we consent or not, is considered by us highly injurious to American or English freedom; therefore do consent to and acquiesce in the late proceedings and advice of the Continental Congress, and do rejoice that those measures are adopted, and so universally received throughout the Continent; and in conformity to the eleventh article of the association, we do now appoint a Committee to attentively observe the conduct of all persons within this town, touching the rules and regulations prescribed by the Honorable Continental Congress, and will unanimously join our Brethren in America in the common cause of defending our liberty.

"Voted—That Mr. John Jenkins, Joseph Sluman, Esq., Nathan Denison, Esq., Mr. Obadiah Gore, Jr., and Lieut. William Buck be chosen a Committee of Correspondence for the town of Westmoreland," etc.

The sincerity of this resolve and as well the efficiency of the Wyoming settlement may be inferred from the fact that this young colony in its sixth year sent eight times its quota to the Revolutionary army. (Miner 207; *Frontier Forts*, i; 437.) They were a force sufficient to have protected their settlement from either Pennamites or Indians. But Wyoming's people seem never to have regarded their own dangers or interests when their patriotism

was appealed to. (Miner, 192.) They knew of the opening of the road through to Niagara (Frontier Forts, i: 433.) that stronghold and rallying point of British power which even then held some of their people captive, and they were watchful of the Tory emissaries of the Penn government and doubtless aware of their designs, yet with the noblest self-sacrificing patriotism they responded thus far beyond their proportion to the calls of the Continental Congress and Washington's extreme need. Lieutenant Gore and Captain Strong had taken into the field what would have been Wyoming's quota and with them the best weapons the colony had. Congress being appraised of the situation, in August, 1776, authorized the raising of two more companies for the express defence of the inhabitants, and these troops, known as Durkee's and Ransom's companies, were also soon ordered to the front, thus practically exhausting the able-bodied men of the young colony. This fact and the knowledge of the danger from the Indians and Tories was the occasion of the following resolutions:

"At a town meeting legally warned and held in Westmoreland, Wilkes-Barre district, August ye 24th, 1776, Col. Butler was chosen moderator for ye work of ye day.

"Voted, it is the opinion of this meeting that it now becomes necessary for ye inhabitants of this town to erect suitable fort or forts, as a defence against our common enemy.

"August 28, 1776, this meeting is opened and held by adjournment.

"Voted ye three field officers of ye regiment of this town be appointed as a committee to view the most suitable places for building forts for ye defence of said town, and determine on some particular spot or place or places in each district for the purpose, and mark out the same.

"Voted, that the above committee do recommend it to the people in each part as shall be set off by them to belong to any fort, to proceed forthwith in building said fort, etc., without either fee or reward from ye said town."

"A beautiful vote," says Miner, which we leave in its simplicity to speak its own eulogy."

"The Wintermoots, a numerous family, seeming to have extraordinary means at command, had purchased and settled near the head of the valley upon a spot where a large spring of water gushes out of a high bank or upper flat. Here they had erected a fortification known as Wintermoot's Fort. This was looked upon with jealousy by the old settlers. A vote was therefore passed that no forts be built except those which should be designated by the military committee. As it was too late to remedy the evil, the committee resolved to counteract it as much as possible by causing a fort to be built a mile above Wintermoot's, in the neighborhood, and under the supervision of the Jenkins and Harding families, leading men and ardent patriots. It was named Fort Jenkins." (Miner, 191.) or properly "Jenkins' Fort," and was situated "about ten or twelve rods northeast of the Pittston Ferry Bridge. Standing upon the top of a high bank and overlooking the river the place was subject to the encroachment of the current. Through the lapse of years a large part of the bluff has been washed away and a considerable part of the site is now the river's bed." (Sheldon Reynolds in Frontier Forts, i: 445.) The structure was a stockade built around and in connection with the dwelling house of John Jenkins, hence its name.

It should not be confused with Fort Jenkins, situate on the north bank of the Susquehanna, in Columbia county, midway between Berwick and Bloomsburg. The latter is, I understand, always called Fort Jenkins, and the Exeter fort usually Jenkins' Fort. The distinction seems to be one which should be observed.

Elisha Harding, in a statement appended to a memorial to congress in 1837, published first as a congressional document, now more readily found in Rev. Mr. Hayden's pamphlet on "The Wyoming Massacre," published by the Historical society at Wilkes-Barre, has given a description of the fort and an account of the building of it, from which I will quote.

"In the month of June, 1777, it was thought proper to commence building forts for defense against the enemy. We went to work: I, but a boy, could

do but little, except driving oxen to haul logs; the logs were about eighteen or twenty feet long and placed in a ditch of sufficient depth (four feet) to stand against anything that could be brought by the enemy against it; the corners so constructed as to rake anything on the outside of the fort that should attempt to assail it. "The logs were placed so as to lap and were sharpened at the top. It is probable that as in Pittston Fort, across the river, they were fastened together with pins and stiffened by horizontal timbers pinned to the uprights inside. One more sentence from Mr. Harding: "It was completed and every man to his work."

A significant remark when it is recalled how much there was to be done in this strictly agricultural community, and the few spared to do it from the army and by the scourge of the small pox, with which the community was then afflicted. It is to be remembered, too, that they then, as they had for many months, were maintaining a regular watch and guard day and night.

Such is the picture of Wyoming for 1777; but before we close the view, allow us to copy a heart touching resolve from the proceedings of a town meeting legally warned, holden Dec. 30. John Jenkins, esq., was chosen moderator for the work of the day:

"Voted by this town, that the committee of inspection be empowered to supply the sogers' wives, and the sogers widows and their families, with the necessities of life."

"Let it be engraved on plates of silver. Let it be printed in letters of gold. Challenge Rome in her Republican glory, or Greece in her Democratic pride, to produce, the circumstances considered, an act more generous and noble." (Miner, 207.)

"In May," Elisha Harding continues, "the people thought best to repair to the fort for safety. Those who went to the Jenkins Fort were the Jenkines, William Marten, Captain Stephen Harding, Benjamin Harding, Stukeley Harding, James Hudsall, Samuel Morgan, Stephen Harding, jr., and Ichabod Phelps, a Miner Robbins, John Gardner and Daniel Carr."

To which list we may add the names

of some of the others, to wit: Ebenezer Reynolds, the boy Rogers, aged 11; the boy John Hadsell, Daniel Wallen, or Weller, and Joel Roberts. John Gardner, Stephen Harding and doubtless others, or these, were accompanied by wives and children. Of those named, Minor Robbins, John Gardner, Daniel Weller, James Hadsell, James Hadsell, jr., Daniel Carr, Benjamin Harding, Stukeley Harding and William Martin were, among others, either killed or taken prisoners before the second of July. Others had been wounded, and when the time for defense came the fort was practically defenseless for want of a garrison.

The enemy, about 1,100 in number, encamped the night of the first of July on the mountain yonder, and parties from the camp passed in and out of Wintermoot. (Frontier Forts, i, 439, 444.) The following day Fort Wintermoot was occupied without resistance and became Major Butler's headquarters, a purpose for which it was possibly originally designed. The same afternoon Butler sent a flag to Jenkins' Fort, "demanding a surrender thereof; Captain Harding and Esquire Jenkins met Butler, and there being but five able bodied men, and two old men and three boys, left in the fort, and the Indians in possession of Wintermoot's, it was thought most advisable to surrender on the following conditions: That nothing should be taken from the inhabitants of the fort, except such things as were wanted for the army, and that to be paid for: the inhabitants to have liberty to return home and occupy their farms in peace, but not to take up arms during the war." (Elisha Harding and compare Art. Capit. Forty Fort.)

"The fort was taken possession of by a Captain Colwell. The next morning, the third of July, they set about demolishing the fort (compare Mr. Gardner's account in Peck's History of Wyoming, p. 355) and in the course of the day, say 1 o'clock, orders came to repair to the Wintermoot Fort, as the Yankees, so-called, were coming out for battle. Nothing more was heard until about 3 or 4 o'clock, when the firing began, and we thought it came near towards us, but soon found it to draw further off, and in some time

appeared more scattering, which made us think that our army was defeated, which soon proved to be too true. Early the next morning we could see them fixing their scalps on little bows made of small sticks, and with their moccasin awls and a string, were sewing them around the bows and scraping off the flesh and blood, carefully drying them, and at the same time smoking." (Elisha Harding, *Hayden* 73.)

Miner prints the following as the articles of capitulation:

"Capitulation of Jenkins' Fort.

(From Her Majesty's State Paper Office, London, entitled 'Military, 1778. No. 122.')

"Fort Jenkins' Fort, July 1st, 1778.

"Between Major John Butler, on behalf of His Majesty King George the Third, and John Jenkins.

"Art. 1st. That the Fort, with all the stores, arms and ammunition, be delivered up immediately.

"2d. That Major John Butler shall preserve to them, entire, the lives of the men, women and children."

Note.—The articles of capitulation of Wintermoot's Fort, same date, are a little more full. Those of the three forts across the river, July 4, are almost identical with Jenkins' Fort. The general capitulation by Colonel Deuison, which included Forty Fort, is more lengthy. All are given in Miner at page 253 et. seq.

To ascertain the accuracy of this transcript, and what signatures were attached to the original, either as parties or as witnesses, I addressed a letter to our distinguished ambassador at the Court of Saint James, enclosing him a copy of the sixty-word document, with the above reference to the particular volume in Her Majesty's State Paper Office, and the request that he have it compared with the original. In reply I was advised that my letter had been turned over to Mr. Benjamin F. Stevens, the eminent biographer, who would "do the job" for me, if I should request it, at a reasonable charge. Before I had found time to reply, the mail brought Mr. Stevens' statement that the records referred to were not originals, but copies, and he went on to quote from Major Butler's report, or letter of

July 8th to Captain Le Maistre (see also report same date to Lieutenant Colonel Bolton, Peck, 54): "What gives me the sincerest satisfaction is, that I can with great truth assure you that in the Destruction of this settlement not a single person has been hurt of the Inhabitants; but such as were in arms; to those, indeed, the Indians gave no quarter." Mr. Stevens also told me of one contemporary who mentioned Major Butler favorably and spoke of him as being "very modest and shy."

The learned gentleman's willingness to palliate the guilt of John Butler prompts me to speak here my sentiment regarding it. To avoid as far as possible, any injustice, I took occasion to visit the Lenox library, in New York city, that I might examine Major Butler's claim upon the British government, a transcript of which I was informed by Mr. Stevens' letter was contained in volume 43 of his transcripts of documents relative to the American loyalists.

From the somewhat restricted use I was permitted to make of the volume, I learned that Major Butler was a native of Connecticut, a son of W. Butler, and a resident of Tryon county, New York, where he owned 3,480 acres, called Butlersbury, twenty-four miles from Schenectady, and one mile from the Mohawk river. He was urged by Mr. Duane, a member of congress, to identify himself with the cause of the colonists, but declined. He served the British under Generals Guy Carleton and Frederick Haldimand. He was attainted of treason, whereby he lost all his lands, and this loss was the basis of his claim upon the British government. In his memorial it is said he "raised a corps of Rangers, first of eight companies, with the rank of major, and afterwards of ten companies, with the rank of lieutenant colonel, completely, and with them he often fought the enemy, particularly at Wyoming, in the year 1778, upon their own terms, when 376 of them fell." At the time of the petition he was drawing the pay of a retired lieutenant colonel. I found, however, nothing which it seemed to me tended to excuse the conduct of Major Butler.

I would not withhold anything of the

most sincere and absolute forgiveness to be accorded a penitent offender. If some of his defenders will show that John Butler ever indicated sorrow for his uncivilized inhumanities, I will withdraw every unkind word said of him and help to cover his repented-of deeds, but in the absence of such evidence, let the scales be held with an even hand; let it be said that he, John Butler, gloried in his inhuman work so long as it meant money and promotion, and stifled the promptings of remorse by writing falsehoods in his report in the hope that it might perhaps save his reputation from the just criticism that would come to be made of him.

There were many such murders as that of young James Hadsell, who was not in arms, but returning with Benjamin and Stukeley Harding from work in the fields up the river on the 30th of June, and John Butler was their murderer. He was exercising military command, but it is not legitimate warfare to lead against a civilized people a horde of such savages, incited by rewards offered for scalps of white men, women and children, and then plead inability to control these agents. John Butler forgot soldierly honor and deliberately, wilfully led on irresponsible agents to do inhuman murder. And his report, printed at length in Peck's history (page 52) marks him for either a braggart, or one careless of his facts. Let the bitterness engendered by these events die out, but tell the truth.

Come with me up the Lackawanna yonder a little way. See those savages who have been led hither by Butler and who shall go back to Niagara to get their bounty for scalps on his certificate. See there—killed not in arms, but bearing his babe and hurrying from the presence of Butler's hired monsters—the mutilated corpse of John Leach. Do you turn aside so soon? Have nerve. Look again. There is his wife receiving her babe from the hands of the murderer. Tell her, as she clutches it to her breast and shrinks away with her little one still stained with its father's blood, that John Butler deserves to be well spoken of—that he is modest and shy. (Hayden 76; Miner 239.)

On this mountain, to the southeast of us, see another mother. She is one of many who are threading the devious paths of this mountain wilderness. The trail she follows is but a rude path through swamp and marsh. She tries to go on, but staggers for very weakness. She stops to look back. Sobbing convulsively, but with that great self-control that belongs to woman borne up by the mother love, and for the sake of this other little one by her side, else the mother, too, had remained here, she hurries away. A little apart from the trail you may find a fallen tree, crumbling into decay. Fanned up against it are some hastily gathered leaves and stones. They cover her babe. You shall see many rude mounds here and many bones will bleach uncovered. This place will be known for centuries to come as the "Shades of Death."

When General Sherman said "War is hell," he spoke of civilized warfare. Neither he, nor you, nor I can imagine the exaggerated horrors of John Butler's campaign when "not a single person was hurt save such as were in arms."

Within sight of where we are gathered, perhaps on this very spot, John Gardner stood near what had been the entrance of Jenkins' Fort, loaded with plunder, the burden of two men, and with a halter round his neck, by which he should be led captive. Here, and he so accoutred, his wife and little ones were brought to bid him good-bye before they should start out on that "Shades of Death" trail and he be led away to the north, and so they would leave of him. What a memory for tender children to carry through life. (Miner, 238; Hayden, 76.) If you could have asked them as they paused on the mountain's brow for a brief, necessary rest, and looked down on the charred remains of their so happy home, would their answer have warranted that contemporary's estimate of Butler, or mine? Or shall we wait our question until a few months later they shall have heard of the killing of their father at Geneva? This John Gardner went out from this Jenkins' Fort to his fields to work and was there taken. I wonder if before they killed him they handed him an empty

rifle so as to bring him within the exception. Or was Butler's report true because death did not hurt John Gardner?

He doubtless knew that Major Butler had solemnly engaged to "preserve to them entire the lives of the men, women and children," and possibly rested in the belief that this "shy and modest" soldier had sent a small detachment of his men as far as the Delaware as a protection to these wards of his, and so John Gardner, secure in the knowledge that his loved ones were under the protection of this brave though "modest and shy" Tory commander, met death without its hurting him.

The scalps Elisha Harding spoke of, and those one of the captives saw further north and noted as including those of women and children were no doubt the same, and were included in those for which payment was made at ten dollars a head. They were in part the measure of John Butler's infamy.

Our historians are too ready to make over our history to help out the rehabilitation of these people and their present day kin. You see and hear it stated frequently nowadays that Brant was not here, and it is getting to be almost accepted history that he was not. But their alleged proofs when carefully scanned prove either too little or too much. It seems to be easy to disprove history. It was no less a person than Archbishop Whately, who, in 1819, published his *Historic Doubts* relative to Napoleon Bonaparte, and Governor Roosevelt, in the first volume of his "Winning of the West," has devoted much space to a refutation of the attacks upon the authenticity of that speech of the Indian chief Logan, beginning "I challenge any white man to say," etc. It has been shown that William Tell was but a myth; that Columbus did not discover America; that Shakespeare was but an ignorant tool of some other person ashamed to acknowledge the authorship of the great plays; that the stories of the Christ's life, death and resurrection are but fables; and now it has been apparently demonstrated that Abraham Lincoln, whom your fathers and mine tell us they knew in the flesh, was but a dream of the historians. I

prefer orthodoxy. I prefer to accept the history of this event of ours as it stood for the first succeeding half century. And I say to you that it has not yet been satisfactorily shown by credible evidence that Brant was not at Wyoming. And certainly not that John Butler is entitled to even a small measure of your good opinion or tolerance.

While on this subject, let me refer to a misquotation of Hon. Steuben Jenkins' address of 1878. William Clement Bryant, in a paper read before the Buffalo Historical society, in 1889 (p. 23), quotes Mr. Jenkins as follows:

"Truth and justice require that another fact which has been omitted should be told at this time. So far as known to the people here not a woman or child was slain by the enemy in the valley. * * * There was no shutting up of whole families in their houses and then fire set to them, and the whole consumed together. No slaughter of whole families, men, women and children, in that or any other way."

The words omitted were "How many were slain by them in the woods, whither they pursued them, was never known." And the omission, I submit, changes the sense of the quotation very materially.

The question has been asked, were the terms of the capitulation respected? I have already told you. It does not seem to have greatly concerned Major Butler that they should be lived up to. It may even be doubted if he greatly desired it. The defenseless situation of the colony was well known at the outset (Miner, 234.) It was to be wiped out, Butler said, because its men took part in the war. His was an expedition, not against warriors, but against defenseless homes and helpless non-combatants. If there was any pretense of complying with the terms of the articles it was an exceedingly modest and shy one. (Note—See further as to Butler, Miner, p. 235.)

Let us turn now from the Tory leader to two of our own people. I wish that time afforded to tell something more of the detail of the lives of others of these heroic men.

Captain Stephen Harding was among

the foremost of the patriotic citizens of Wyoming, and the ranking military officer in Jenkins' Fort, and had there been occasion to exercise military command it would doubtless have devolved upon him. He and Judge Jenkins went out together to meet the British officer (Captain Colwell) and treat for capitulation. Both his father and grandfather had borne the same name and title which he honored, and his great grandfather was Stephen Harding, of Providence. Captain Harding was one of the truest of patriots and few families felt more severely than his the hardships of the war for our independence.

He married Amy Gardner, and settled in Colchester, Conn., in 1747, and there his children were born. He was among the early members of the Connecticut Susquehanna company, came to Wyoming in 1770, settled here at the head of the valley, and here he died Oct. 11, 1789, aged 66 years. He had twelve children, of whom three were daughters. Of the sons, Israel served throughout the Revolution; Thomas was a soldier, present at the battle of Saratoga, and witnessed the surrender of Burgoyne; David was taken captive at Wyoming, while Benjamin and Stukeley, killed on the afternoon of the last day of June, returning from their fields up the river, were the first victims of the savage invasion. They fought as long as they could raise a hand, but were overpowered, killed, scalped and otherwise horribly mutilated. Their bodies were recovered and buried in the cemetery at the forks of the road a short distance from here. John, a lad of 13, had been one of this same party, but escaped by throwing himself into the river, where he lay under the willows. The Indians searched for him, but though they were at one time so near they could have touched him, he was not discovered. Elisha, also a mere boy, rendered, as we have seen, important assistance in the erection of the fort. Surely the name of Captain Stephen Harding of the Seventh company, Twenty-fourth regiment, Connecticut militia, Litchfield county deserves prominent mention in the history of this valley beside those of Colonel Zebulon Butler, Lieu-

tenant Colonel George Dorrance, Major John Garrett, and the other battle heroes of that war. Surely this family paid the last full measure of service to the cause. Nor has the strain of virile blood been exhausted. Captain Stephen's great grandson, Judge Garrick M. Harding, our neighbor, who is enjoying a well-earned rest after a long life of usefulness, is not the only descendant of the family who has held high official position and honored this noble ancestry.

John Jenkins, sr., for whom Jenkins' Fort was named, was born of Quaker ancestry, in Kingston, R. I., Feb. 6, 1727-8, and removed, in 1750, to Colchester, Conn., where he taught school, and married Lydia, daughter of Stephen Gardner. He was connected with one of the expeditions against Louisburg. (James Atherton Gordon, in *Pittston Gazette*, of Sept. 4, 1874.) John and Lydia had seven children, all of whom came to this valley, and from two of whom are descended thirteen of the members of your chapter.

He seems to have been among the early members of the Connecticut Susquehanna company, having in November or early December, 1754, purchased what was apparently a second share. From the fact that he was in the company so early and that his money was paid to the secretary instead of to one of the committees, and from his early and continued prominence in the affairs of the company, I infer that he was among its organizers. Mr. Gordon says he was undoubtedly the projector of the Indian congress held at Albany in 1754. Colonel Wright, in his "Historical Sketches of Plymouth" (page 73), says Judge Jenkins was sent here in 1753 to view the land, treat with the Indians, survey and make purchases. Governor Hoyt is authority for the fact that he made surveys here in 1754. (Brief of Title, 56.) In 1755 he ascertained the latitude of Wilkes-Barre. (Historical Record, i, 121.) And it was he who made the allotment to the forty settlers of Kingston. (Gordon, ib.) I credit these authorities notwithstanding the recent denial by a local genealogist, of some of the facts involved. (The Harvey Book, 921.) If it be true as has been suggested, that

Colonel Wright and Governor Hoyt received their information from the late Steuben Jenkins, the fact does not make their statements any less entitled to credence. Both died, and Mr. Jenkins also, before this denial appeared, and we may not know whether they were shown by him contemporary documentary evidence, or took the ipse dixit of Mr. Jenkins without question. If the latter, they simply did what every one else has done in matters of local history to this day. No one, so far as I know, has ever questioned his statement of a simple historical fact before. He was recognized as severely exact, and I know of nothing in his life or in the evidence at hand that should lead us to question this statement of his. Indeed, he is distinctly confirmed by Mr. Gordon, who gives his authorities as his mother and his uncle, Elisha Atherton, who were in position to have known and were clearly disinterested in these statements.

The records of the company show John Jenkins to have been frequently appointed on its most important committees, such as, "to inspect the settlement to me made;" to attend an Indian congress "with full power to treat;" to oversee, determine and regulate the settlement of the first ten townships; "to receive proprietors;" "to approve, admit, oversee, superintend, manage and order the affairs and proceedings of the first forty settlers;" to apportion and divide expense money; "on the government of the settlement;" "to lay out road;" etc. Here in Wyoming he was also prominent. He was selectman and listener; was member from Westmoreland of the Connecticut assembly five terms; was on a committee of three to repair to each town and lead them to choice of officers; one of the school committee; on committee to mark a road from the Delaware to the Susquehanna; was appointed by the Connecticut legislature first county judge of Westmoreland; and, what I would esteem the highest honor, he was moderator of the meetings which adopted the patriotic resolutions of August 1st, 1775, identifying the colony with the Revolutionary cause, and those of December 30, 1777, so highly commended by Miner.

He was first of Kingston township and held a lot about where Forty-Fort Cemetery now is, and he became one of the organizers of the new town of Exeter. In the allotment of lands in Exeter Judge Jenkins drew the lot including the spot on which we are gathered, and here his home was established. We have already seen how the fort was built about his house, how in the hopelessness of resistance it was surrendered, and how on the morning of that fateful July 3d it was destroyed. He set out July 6th with his family and some of their neighbors, on foot, for Connecticut, but from Stroudsburg went on public business to Harris's Ferry, (now Harrisburg), Pennsylvania, and thence to Wyoming again. From there he proceeded with Col. Nathan Denison to Hartford, where, on the 27th of October they presented to the legislature of Connecticut a memorial written by himself and signed by himself and Col. Denison in behalf of the Wyoming sufferers. In the bill of losses those of John Jenkins are stated as £598, 1s., the fourth largest on the list. (Harvey Book, 995.) Early in 1779 he joined his family in New London county, Connecticut, and remained with them until the autumn of 1782, when they returned to their former home in Exeter, in the Wyoming valley. On the 19th and again on the 22d of April, 1783, we find him speaking in behalf of the settlers before the commissioners appointed under the Pennsylvania "Confirming Act." (Hoyt, 56.) In May, a year later, he was driven a third time from this valley. The first was after the Indian massacre of 1763, the second after the massacre of 1778, this time it was before the Pennsylvanians. He went on foot with little of this world's goods, an old man, lame and broken in health, and with a heavy heart. Among his dearest possessions, carried, it is said, strapped to his back, was the bible that had been for many years his solace and strength. His life had been spent in the most honorable, patriotic, public service. He believed in the justice of the Connecticut claim as he believed in the truths of that bible, and he, probably more than any other one person, not excepting even John

Franklin himself, was representative of it. He, too, probably more than any other one person has been responsible for the occupancy to-day of north-eastern Pennsylvania by the Yankees, instead of by the later coming German emigrants from the Palatinates. He died that same Fall at Goshen, New York, and was buried at a place called The Drowned Lands, in the town of Florida, in Orange county, New York.

It has been claimed that Judge Jenkins was the person from whom Campbell drew his character of Albert. That Campbell, who had never visited America, had any acquaintance with or special knowledge of Judge Jenkins is not to be supposed; nevertheless, the claim is not an unreasonable one to be made. He was as we have seen, one of the first settlers; he had suffered in the first Indian massacre; had served as Justice of the Peace and as first county judge. And the local historians unite in speaking of him as one of the foremost of the men of Wyoming and Westmoreland and one whose character and attainments would fully warrant the high terms of praise with which Campbell speaks of Albert.

A word with reference to the subsequent history of the site seems appropriate. Judge Jenkins died before the passage of the compromise act of 1799. It is probable that he would never have acknowledged Pennsylvania's right by taking title under her. His children, however, appear to have received certificates from the Commissioners for portions of his lands here, this particular part going, I understand, to Thomas. From Thomas it passed to his own grandson, Amos York Smith, son of Dr. John Smith and his wife Mehitable Jenkins. Mr. Smith owned it until 1857 when it became the property of Mr. Ralph D. Lacoe and others, and from them, Mr. Lacoe, Mr. Theodore

Strong and the estate of R. J. Wisner, your chapter gets title to-day by gift.

I have been obliged for want of time to omit much interesting and appropriate matter which is in a way connected with this old-time fort and its occupants, yet really rather part of the history and romance of the whole valley. There is much more of Elisha Harding's account, and it is now fortunately readily accessible. I find in our old law reports a reference to an arrest of John Franklin, Elisha Satterlee, John Jenkins and others on account of their support of the Connecticut side of the Yankee-Pennamite controversy from which an interesting tale could doubtless be told by one who had time to follow the clue. I should specially like to have gathered up some of the threads of the life of Capt. Jeremiah Blanchard from whom a considerable number of your members trace descent, but though he lived just across the river there, I do not know that he was specially connected with this particular fort and so I have passed him by.

We have been told that no part of this country of so limited an extent has been so much written about as this valley. I am sure none can have more of romantic interest or more lessons of patriotism. I have found the study of our local history one of absorbing interest and commend it to you. There were noble men here in those days and events enacted with far reaching effect on the history not only of this valley, but of the Commonwealth and nation.

If this modest stone shall lure to this story of the past the attention of but a few of those who must see it, among the children and youth born to this rich heritage, or among the foreigners coming among us, it will have well justified your project and the persistent efforts by which you have overcome the obstacles which have hindered you.

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